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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

★ APR 26 1932 ★
Monday, May 2, 1932 of Agriculture

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Topic: The Child's Food and His Health."

Publications Available: "How to Spend Your Food Money"; "Getting the Most for Your Food Money"; and Farmers' Bulletin 1674-F, "Food for Children."

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After hearing some three radio talks about the health of children, and listening to the reading of President Hoover's proclamation, and also reading it for himself a couple of times in the newspapers, Uncle Ebenezer asked me yesterday evening if it wasn't about time for the annual observance of Child Health Day.

Knowing that that was his way of introducing some remarks I said nothing. Which was his cue to proceed.

"And the way we observe Child Health Day reminds me of something I read in a venerable copy of a magazine at the dentist's office last week," he proceeded.

"This magazine carried a three line skit on the joke page that ran something like this

" 'The careful motorist stopped to look and listen at the railroad grade crossing.

" 'All he heard was the crash as the car behind smashed into his gas tank.'

"Now that piece of cynicism seems to me to apply a little bit to the way this great nation of ours observes Child Health Day. We solemnly prate of education for social responsibility, and preschool clinics, and free expression of childish emotions. We ought to be getting down to cases on nourishing children so they'll have a chance to make the most of education and medical care and so they'll have pleasant emotions to express.

"We stop look and listen too much for the danger signs in education and what not, and pay too little attention to the menace of malnutrition."

But at that point I had to stop Uncle Ebenezer's enjoyment of denouncing the follies and foibles of humanity in general and American humanity in particular. Because we are paying lots of attention these days to proper nutrition to children. I read Ebenezer a statement recently issued by the child specialist of the Bureau of Home Economics, Rowena Schmidt Carpenter. Mrs. Carpenter and other workers in the Bureau gather together information on child nutrition. Mrs. Carpenter has written a popular bulletin on "Food for Children" which gives the guideposts to follow to correct feeding of your child. Other workers in the Federal Service

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5/2/32

have in recent months got up concise directions on how to make sure a child is adequately nourished at minimum expense. Now here is what Mrs. Carpenter says about the interest in child nutrition:

"We get thousands of letters asking special advice on feeding children. Some mothers come with particular dietary problems, but the majority of them want to know how they can spend their money to keep their children well.

"This problem is not entirely confined to persons of the lower income levels. Families who spend the most for food are frequently getting the least for their money. Having the price to buy does not automatically safeguard nutrition.

"Not all foods furnish an equal nutritional value for a given expenditure. For this reason we have developed the food guides. Growing children especially need foods that supply building materials. Milk contains efficient proteins for children, since it provides them with the various kinds that are very useful in making muscle. In addition, milk is valuable for its vitamin and mineral content. That's why we advise such a large milk quota for children. Milk is especially important when the income is low.

"A restricted diet is likely to lack some of the very necessary materials that promote growth and development of children. For instance, calcium, phosphorus, and iron are three minerals very important in the diet of a growing child. But they are not so abundant in all foods. So the maker of the diet for the young person has to be sure that he includes foods that carry enough of these minerals. Milk is the best source of calcium. Most fruits, vegetables, and meat, as well as milk, supply phosphorus. But unless you give a child egg yolk, green colored vegetables, prunes, raisins, and liver, his diet is likely to be low in iron.

"Now let's see about the cost of the foods that give these necessary elements. You can use either fresh, evaporated, or dried milk. Some one of these forms--perhaps all of them-- will be relatively inexpensive now. Eggs certainly are selling at low prices at this season. Many cuts of meat at present are as low as 7 and 8 cents a pound. Calf liver is still in the delicacy class, but beef and pork liver offer similar nutritive value and are low in price. So that leaves fruits and vegetables as likely to be the most expensive food item each week -- unless you choose them carefully.

"Children need raw and quickly cooked vegetables. Fortunately, people restricted to small expenditures for food, as well as families fortunate enough to be able to plan more elaborate diets, can serve such vegetables to their families. The variety won't be quite so great when the food money is limited, but the results can be the same in maintaining the wellbeing of the children. The cost of vegetables usually depends on the locality where you're buying them and on the season of the year. So prudent diet planners choose seasonable vegetables. But cabbage is inexpensive the year around, and canned tomatoes serve practically the same purpose as fresh tomatoes, for this vegetable retains its vitamin content better than most when heated.

"Tomatoes also are interchangeable with citrus fruits. Spinach and other greens are at present inexpensive most everywhere and naturally should appear

often in the meals for children -- and grownups, too, for that matter.

"So far we've been talking about foods that supply minerals and vitamins. But children also require foods that supply energy. This need becomes greater as children increase in size and weight and become more active. Fats, sugar, and grain products supply energy more cheaply than most other foods. The food guides issued by the Departments of Agriculture and Labor point out how to get a balanced supply of the energy-making constituents from the most inexpensive groups of fats, sugars, and grain products.

"Finally, remember that modern nutritionists say to let children have almost any food provided it is suitably selected and prepared. There are very few absolute 'thou shalt nots' any more. We merely emphasize the method of preparation, giving preferences to broiling, baking, steaming, and boiling foods, rather than to frying them. And the better way to serve meals to children is to have the heavier protein dishes at noon rather than at night, since the children are sent to bed soon after the evening meal. If part of an evening dinner for the rest of the family is saved out for the children's noon meal, no extra foods need be bought."

"Well, there's Mrs. Carpenter's say about the interest in child nutrition -- and about the practical way to practice child nutrition whether your income is very low, or whether it is ample. I think Mrs Carpenter pretty well answers Uncle Ebenezer with his idea that because we talk about education and training we are forgetting child nutrition. To the contrary. Modern mothers unanimously feel their first responsibility to be proper feeding of their children.

Topping off this information about child nutrition I felt that we must of course have a menu suitable for children, so I appealed to Mrs. Carpenter again. "But", she said, "you remember that the modern way is to have all of the family menus planned so they are suitable for the little folks as well as the big folks." And so that's the kind she planned for today, a whole-family menu. The meat for this menu is Jellied Veal, a very good-looking dish whether it comes to the table molded in individual servings or in one large mold to use as a centerpiece. Individual molds are attractive. And about the rest of the menu. There will be diced potatoes with cream sauce, and if you wish, with a bit of chopped parsley to garnish. Young tender carrots, so full of gay sunshiny color, and so full, too, of fine food value, are at their best in the market now, so buttered new carrots are on the menu too. And for the youngest children, shredded or chopped lettuce mixed with a little soft, creamy butter will be made into sandwiches with whole wheat bread. The older children and big folks, too, may prefer a lettuce salad, and bread and butter. And now dessert. We can never forget that when the children are around. Nor should we. Simple desserts are good energy foods. Note, I said SIMPLE ones, not rich cakes and pastries. For this Child Health Day dinner we'll have a fresh strawberry sundae, a round scoop of vanilla ice cream with a dip of crushed sweetened strawberries and their juice over it.

Let me repeat the menu.

- Jellied veal
- Creamed diced potatoes
- Buttered new carrots
- Shredded lettuce sandwiches
- Fresh strawberry sundae.

I'm not giving you a recipe today because I'm sure your cookbook has good directions for everything we've suggested in the menu.

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TOMORROW: "The Home and the Child."

